



Walker's Haute Route East (Self-Guided)

Please email us at info@alpineexploratory.com or call us on +44 0)1729 823 197 to chat about this holiday. You'll find all the latest information at www.alpineexploratory.com/holidays/walkers-haute-route-east.html.



A glimpse of the Matterhorn

About these Holiday Notes

These Holiday Notes help you decide whether this holiday is right for you. Before your trip we send you final detailed information.

Details

Start Arolla
Finish Zermatt
Regions Swiss Valais
Countries Switzerland
Length 7 walking days and 8 nights
Total distance 95km or 60 miles
Typical day 14km (9 miles), 1010m ascent
Highest altitude 2,916m
Grade Expert

Introduction

The Walker's Haute Route is one of the finest, if not the finest, trek of its type in Europe. Pick up the trail in Arolla and trek to Zermatt in a week of superb Alpine walking.

This is the Walker's Haute Route as opposed to the Classic Haute Route, which takes to the high mountains and glaciers and is often made on skis. Our route is a trek, with no technical ground.

Zermatt as a trek destination is just right: lively, pleasant and thoroughly in tune with its surrounding mountains. If you have the time, ask us to book you an extra day or two at the end of your trip, to enjoy being in Zermatt. Local walks are excellent. Arolla by contrast is very small, but with a high-mountain atmosphere and its own charm.

The trek is a challenging one. The route crosses a succession of passes at nearly 3,000m, guaranteeing stiff climbs most mornings. Navigation can be difficult in mist. The high passes are steep and rocky in places. Typically they are free of snow during

the summer, but in colder weather their altitude means rain can fall as snow.

Your first stage to La Sage is more gentle, walking through the verdant, pastoral Swiss Val d'Herens. On your last two days you follow the exacting Europaweg into Zermatt with the Matterhorn increasingly in sight. On the Europaweg are some carries with loose rock where smart and steady-on-foot progress is recommended.

Our approach

Your route

Our trip gives a complete journey on foot from Arolla to Zermatt. No transport is needed along the route. The Haute Route is a loosely defined trail where map and compass skills are needed to supplement any waymarks on the ground. There are no 'Haute Route' waymarks to follow. Where the trail splits we follow routes via Col de Tsate, the Forcletta and the Europaweg, but our routecards describe alternative routes too. This trip of course picks up the Haute Route in Arolla and complements the Western half of the route.

Routecards and maps

Each day's route is explained in detail on your routecards, to bring you to your night's accommodation. We give you the real maps for you to follow, not printouts or photocopies.

Getting there and back

Your holiday starts in Arolla and ends in Zermatt. Travel to Arolla and from Zermatt is not included in the holiday price - we leave it to you to make the arrangements that suit you best. Geneva and Zurich are the most convenient airports with several transfer options available. Full information on flight and transfer options will be sent to you on booking.

Itinerary

Day 1: Arrival in Arolla

Evening arrival in Arolla. Enjoy dining out in this tiny mountain resort. **Hotel in Arolla**

Day 2: Arolla to La Sage

This is an easy valley walk. Begin with a stroll down to the attractive village of Les Haudères in Val d'Herens; finish with a short walk up to the hamlet of La Sage. **Hotel in La Sage**

Day 3: La Sage to Cabane de Moiry

This is a stage of 3 sections. First climb to Col du Tsate, then drop to the foot of Glacier de Moiry and lastly climb again beside the glacier to Cabane de Moiry, perhaps the best-sited of all our Haute Route huts. **Cabane de Moiry**

Day 4: Cabane de Moiry to Zinal

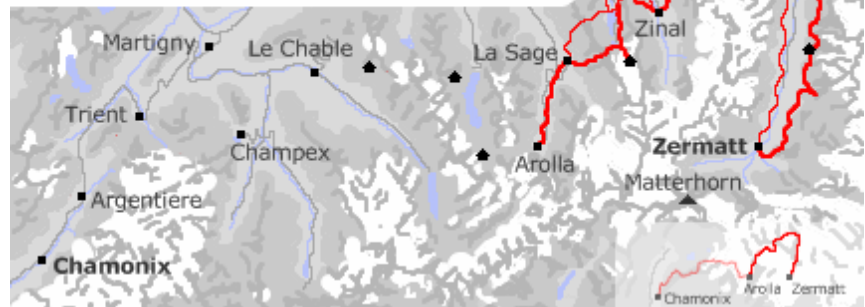
A traverse and a relatively short climb lead to Col de Sorebois. Then a descent, steep at the end, brings you to Zinal. Zinal is an interesting little place to spend a night and has good options for eating out. **Hotel in Zinal**

Day 5: Zinal to Gruben

A traversing path gains height steadily from Zinal with long views back to the head of the valley. Higher up, reach the Forcletta pass and enter the German-speaking part of the Valais. Gruben is a small village in the quiet Turtmantal valley. **Auberge in Gruben**

Day 6: Gruben to St Niklaus

The Augstbordpass at 2,893m is the last pass before the valley of Zermatt is reached. The ascent should feel very manageable, being well-angled and full of interest. Drop to Jungen above the Mattertal valley and with views into its upper reaches but not yet to Zermatt or the Matterhorn themselves. A last descent in woods and you arrive in the valley at St Niklaus. **Hotel in St Niklaus**



Day 7: St Niklaus to Europahütte

After an initial climb to Gasenried you join the Europaweg, the 2-day trail into Zermatt. The route is a traverse at a high level, crossing rocky combs sometimes on loose ground where rockfalls have occurred. Views to the Matterhorn open up later in the day. Arrive at a fine hut high above the valley. **Europahütte**

Day 8: Europahütte to Zermatt

Complete the route to Zermatt, again crossing rocky ground but now with the aid of tunnels and shelters in places. An easy high traverse in full view of the Matterhorn takes you to Sunnegga above Zermatt from where you drop steeply via the hamlet Findeln. Arrive with time to get to know Zermatt. It's a resort with a lot going on. **Hotel in Zermatt**

Day 9: Departure from Zermatt

Morning departure from Zermatt

Our usual schedule of accommodation might not be available, especially if there is not much time between booking and your trip starting. We will book accommodation as closely as possible to this itinerary and present you a schedule for you to check before we proceed.

Accommodation

Our standard schedule of accommodation consists of 1 night in a 4-star hotel, 2 nights in 3-star hotels, 3 nights in auberges or simple hotels, and 2 nights in mountain huts.

The huts are comfortable and welcoming. Hut accommodation is in dormitories, either on Alpine-style communal sleeping platforms or in bunk beds. In the hotels and auberges we book ensuite accommodation except where it is not available, for example in older buildings or more remote locations. Your info pack contains full details of your accommodation including contact details and directions.

The walking**Terrain**

Haute Route terrain comprises wide tracks through forests, the odd country lane, zig-zagging hillside paths and steep, rocky mountain paths. In some places the paths are particularly steep and loose, for example on the final approaches to cols.

The Haute Route has no *via ferrata* or climbing sections and is a trek throughout, albeit a tough one.

Your own routes

While your routecards make up the walking for the trip, you are of course free to walk wherever you choose, taking side trips or going by a different route of your own choice. Please note that if you follow your own route you will have left the holiday for the duration.

Food

Meals included are all breakfasts and 4 evening meals (at La Sage, at Gruben and at the 2 huts).

For lunches there is lots of opportunity to stock up on ingredients along the route. You will sometimes find huts and cafés during the walking, useful for lunch stops. Your routecards give information about food shops and refreshment stops along the route.

For eating out on those nights where dinner is not included, there are good options in the village.

Insurance

Clients must have insurance to cover themselves for helicopter search & rescue, medical expenses and repatriation. We recommend, but it is not compulsory, that you also have cover for personal liability, cancellation and your baggage and money. You might find that your annual multi-trip travel insurance covers these items already. We will send you details of suitable insurance policies on booking.

Passports and visas

UK passport holders do not need a visa to enter Switzerland. Please check that your passport is in date.

Weather

The weather in the Swiss Valais from July to September is generally highly suitable for Alpine walking.

While snowfall is possible on higher ground all year round, it is unlikely in July and August. During cold spells in summer, rain can fall as snow on the Haute Route's higher passes. Additionally, patches of snow left over from Winter and Spring might linger into July, but should not pose problems.

July and August are commonly the hottest months but with greater amounts of rain and greater risk of afternoon thunder storms; the first half of September can be stable, with the chance of some beautifully clear days.

Thunderstorms are a particular danger in summer, occurring most often in the afternoons.

This all means that it is sensible to come equipped and expecting all the types of weather that might be experienced in a typical summer in the UK: from heavy rain storms with a chill in the air, to hot sunshine.

Equipment

You will need the usual equipment for mountain walking in the Alps. Especially important are good walking boots, waterproofs and sun protection. For the huts you will need a sheet liner.

We will send you an equipment list on booking. Please also see the Equipment page of our website for more information.

Local expenses

Local expenses include food and drink other than those meals that are included, plus any local transport, attractions and extras.

Guided days

Hire a professional mountain leader to join you on this self-guided holiday, for one or more days. A leader helps plan and carry out each day's walking and adds interest to your holiday by pointing out local features. Please contact us for prices and more information.

Groups

Walk by yourself or in your own group, or see if we can match you up with other like-minded walkers on the same holiday. Any group will be a maximum of 8 people.

Hazards**Health**

Switzerland does not require tourists to take any vaccinations. However, it is recommended to keep tetanus vaccines up to date.

Safety

This is adventure travel! This holiday takes you to some wild and remote areas, in particular some areas of upland mountains where navigation can be difficult in poor weather. The weather can also be a hazard in itself. During any walking, whether following a routecard or making your own route, you are responsible for your own actions and safety and you should join the trip with suitable skills, experience and equipment.

Further information

Please email us with any questions at info@alpineexploratory.com.

Disclaimer

This information is given in good faith and is believed to be correct at the time of issue. Alpine Exploratory cannot be liable for any loss or injury incurred.